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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

HOW TO FURNISH A FLAT FOR \$250.

By N. S. STOWELL.

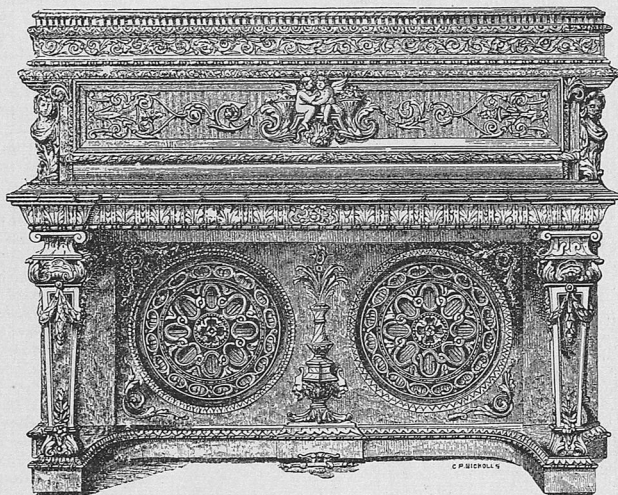


"F" "economy is the road to wealth," as we were told in the platitudinous contents of the copy books of our youthful days, then we were well on the highway to a competence. By a little pinching, lopping off a luxury here and pruning an extravagance there, and watching every turn and corner to see that the most was made of everything without depriving ourselves of actual necessities, which is the poorest economy in the world, we had

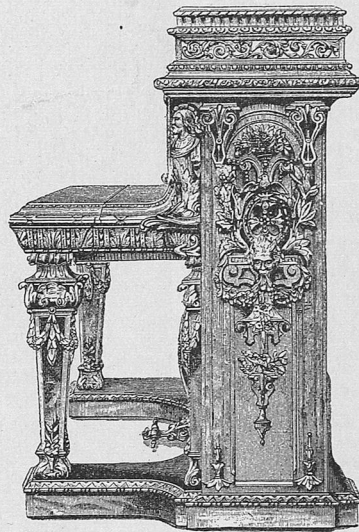
saved up two hundred and fifty dollars, and with this we decided to furnish a flat and set up housekeeping on our own account.

Now, there are several ways of furnishing and we held long and earnest conversations on the subject. Whether to begin

long after finishing. At top and bottom they were turned down, hemmed and shirred, with very slender rods run through the shirring and fastened at each side of the casing. Brass rods were too expensive, so we used galvanized iron rods and gilded them. Seven yards of mull, at 18 cents per yard, \$1.26, and 30 cents per window for rods and fixtures made the entire window finish, cost, \$1.86. There we stopped for the time being and went on to the dining-room. This was twelve by thirteen feet, and upon the floor was placed a good rug of ingrain carpet which covered the floor, except some narrow edges which were filled in with odd pieces of matting left over after all the other floors were covered. The ingrain rug cost \$12.00 at a special sale and being of excellent quality was a good bargain at that. The extension table was \$10.00. There were many cheaper ones, but as a rule we decided to avoid cheap goods unless they were really first-class bargains. Four cane-seated chairs, at \$1.25 each, absorbed \$5.00, and a cane rocker at \$3.25, and a large rocker with arms at \$4.00, made us stop and counsel just how we were coming out. As there was a pretty corner cupboard we decided to wait awhile before purchasing a side-board. A small table between the windows seemed a necessary addition to the expenses. Then we compromised on a stand at \$1.50, with prospective cover of home-made fancy work of some attractive sort.



RICHLY ORNAMENTED ENGLISH PIANOFORTE.



furnishing with a good deal of home-made and save the money to put on the finishing touches and to supply ourselves with some little luxuries, possibly to have a trifle left, to fall back on as it were, or to buy outright and take the chances of having enough to go around.

Of course there were estimates and lists and plans without number. We had half a score sent to us by interested friends as well as by dealers in furnishing goods, and many a puzzled hour we had in trying to make up our minds.

The flat had six rooms—sitting-room, dining-room, kitchen and three sleeping rooms. The sitting-room was twelve feet square and had two large windows looking south, and a door connected it with a hall bedroom seven feet wide by ten feet long with one window also looking upon the street.

One roll of matting, containing forty yards, was bought for \$8.00. Of this, sixteen yards in four strips each four yards long were used upon the sitting-room floor. For carpet lining we substituted newspapers, of which there were quantities about the place. We used what seemed a great amount, but they dulled the sound of steps perfectly and made the rooms much more quiet. There were shades at the front windows, and only some pretty half curtains were to be added. For this we bought even yards of figured mull. The curtains were each one yard

We could in an emergency use the dining-room for a sitting-room; indeed we almost always took our work there of evenings, or if there were callers for one of us the other found the dining-room a cosy retreat. As the dining-room was at the back of the house there were no shades belonging to the windows, and so shades must be bought. Indeed they were up only on the front of the building, and all of the other windows had to be fitted up. The two dining-room windows had neat shades of holland, costing 65 cents each. A cylinder stove and pipe were purchased at a bargain, \$8.00 covering the outlay for heating apparatus. The room being now comfortable and home-like we could here find a place of refuge and a pleasant spot in which to rest. The fitting up of this room had already cost almost one-third of our bank account, and we wondered how the remainder could be made to cover the necessary expenditures for the rest of the house.

The kitchen had range and tubs, so that outlay was avoided. There was also a cupboard or pantry with doors above and below, and a sort of store closet in an angle of the wall.

Everybody who has boarded has some conveniences for light housekeeping, and we had a few plates, cups, pans and cooking utensils, for we had made stews and served fruit and coffee by the aid of a gas stove. So there were fewer demands than might

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otherwise have been the case. A kitchen table at \$1.50, wash-boiler \$2.00, wringer \$2.75. Three baking pans, 25 cents each, 75 cents; large pan for roasts, etc., 40 cents. Three stew kettles, average 30 cents, 90 cents. Two coal scuttles, 60 cents each, \$1.20. Dish pan, 60 cents; 3 patent smoothing irons, \$2.60. Clothes basket, 75 cents, line 50 cents, pins, 30 cents, ironing board, 60 cents, \$2.15 in all. This consumed about \$15.00, and to this amount was added \$5.00, which was laid aside to invest at the furnishing store in odd and ends, such as spoons, forks, can-opener, rolling-pin, cake pans, and the like.

There were two comfortable sized bedrooms, and the floors of these we covered with matting. From the roll of forty yards twenty-four had remained. The bedrooms were each nine feet by ten, and the twenty-four yards just about covered the two floors. One large window in each room required a shade which cost 40 cents, and half curtains of white dotted Swiss, for which two and one-half yards were necessary. This 80 cents for shades and five yards of mull at 18 cents, made \$1.70 for window fittings. The curtains were strung on picture wire, which was not counted as anything.

When the floors and windows were done it began to look like living we said, and we felt encouraged.

But the problem of beds was a serious one to struggle with, as we disliked cheapness here more than anywhere else, for cheapness seemed to us only another name for discomfort.

Buying ordinary bedroom suites was not to be thought of. A full sized bedstead would leave no space at all in which to move about, and nothing is more demoralizing than a lack of elbow room. Folding beds were therefore a necessity, and to the selection of these we turned our attention. In our way of thinking cabinet-cased beds had little to commend them. They were enormously heavy and very difficult to keep clean. Where one is at the mercy of all sorts of landlords and tenants, cleanliness is no trifling consideration. Once let trouble begin with a cabinet bed, and the wisest thing to do is to make a bon-fire of it or sell it—cheap—to your worst enemy. We know, for we moved into an old house and tried it once, and after having on divers and sundry occasions lifted several hundred pounds of iron bars out of the head of the bed, and almost broken our arms in replacing them, we didn't care to be caught napping again. We

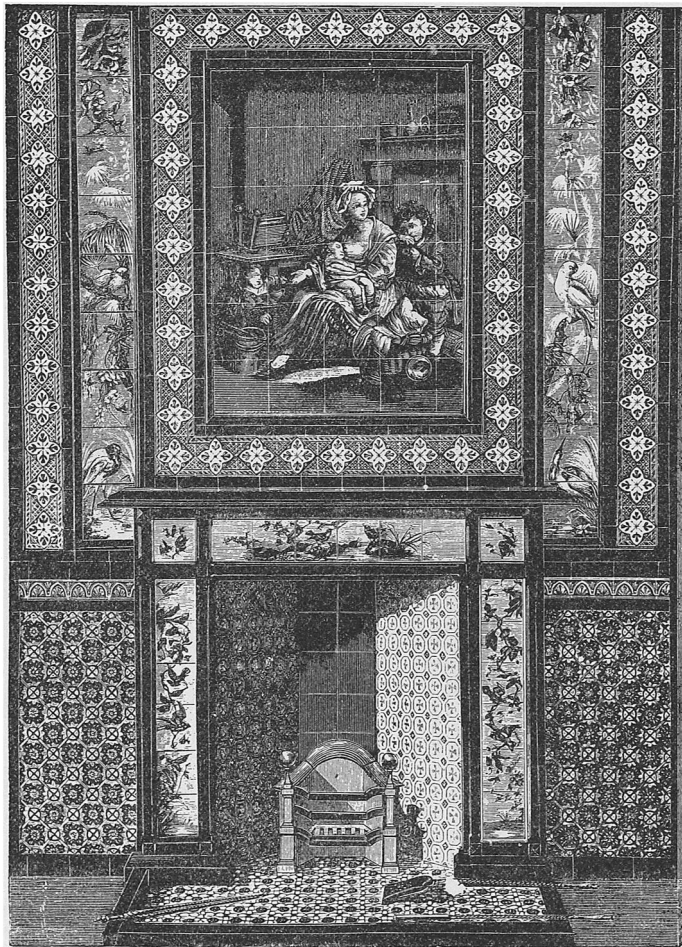
found upright folding beds in skeleton frames which looked much more promising. They had woven wire mattresses, and when closed a curtain fell to the floor concealing the bed portion. Very good styles were bought for \$10. As it was summer weather we decided to do as a matter of economy what we had often done from choice. So we bought no mattress, using instead a sort of comfortable made from cotton. Indeed in warm weather we had often thrown the hair mattress off altogether and used an ordinary comfortable with most satisfactory results, as one can readily discover by trying the experiment.

It would be time enough if we bought our mattresses later in the season, then we could get better ones, and would feel that they were a permanent investment. Husk and cotton top mattresses grow lumpy and hard after a little use, and are altogether comfortable and by no means economical in the long run. Still if it were cold weather we must have them, as those of hair were out of accord with the existing state of our finances.

The bedrooms were nine feet by ten in size, and ten yards of matting in three strips, each ten feet long, covered each floor. As allowance was made for turning under at the ends, this consumed the greater part of the remainder of the roll of matting, leaving only sufficient for an edge in the dining room, the floors of the bath room and clothes closet. Therefore the balance of the cost of the roll, \$4.80, was charged against the bedrooms.

Something in the way of a bureau was an imperative necessity, so a pretty dressing case in ash with square mirror was added to each room. These cost \$9.00 each, and being well made and trimmed, proved very satisfactory. There were closets or wardrobes built into the bedrooms, therefore the dressing cases answered for small

belongings, while clothes could be hung on the pegs, and garments from the laundry could be folded and laid on the shelves. One bedroom had a stationary wash-basin and needed no toilet set. As the other must be fitted up, a packing box of suitable size was mounted on blocks in which were set bedstead casters. The box was draped with a curtain made from the skirt of a light colored satteen dress. The casters cost 25 cents; the cost of the remainder was not counted, as there was no cash outlay. A chair for each room was necessary. These were of ash to match the dressing case and cost



A TILED FIRE-PLACE.

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\$1.00 each. Some old curtain poles were sawed in three foot lengths, and fastened together in the middle in a sort of a saw-horse fashion. To the upper ends were nailed a square board furnished by the carpenter. Two small tables or stands were made in this way at a cost of 40 cents each. A couple of soap boxes were fitted with casters and covered with fancy cushions and little valances. These were made, one for each room, and were used as seats when one's shoes must be buttoned. Six sheets were quite as few as we thought we could do with, and these made of two yards wide sheeting, at 22 cents per yard, cost \$3.30. Pillow cases were bought in an odd lot, and cost for four pairs, \$1.50 for the lot. Although they were not exactly mates they answered every purpose, and with some linen sheets and pillow cases, which were family heirlooms, spun and woven by the great grandmother and only used on highdays and holidays, this outfit would do very well.

We had a couple of comfortables and wanted some California blankets. But little children sometimes want the moon, and big children want sometimes and want in vain and so it was in this item. The best we could do was to invest in some remnants of table felt. Short lengths of two yards were bought at a sale for \$1.20 each. The goods was two and one-half yards wide, and this furnished the length. The pieces were bound with bias bindings of pink or blue cambric, and the result was a bed blanket quite as soft and warm as a California, and what more could be desired.

A knitted spread and a very pretty crazy quilt furnished the counterpane, and for emergency and change a neat Marseilles spread was bought at a cost of \$1.85.

The bedrooms were now very well furnished, china toilet articles for one room costing \$2.50.

With the bedrooms almost done, the dining-room in comfortable shape, and the kitchen well started, light began to dawn on our hitherto doubtful pathway. About \$45 had been laid out in the dining-room, and at least \$85 would be necessary by the time little odds and ends were ready to complete the two bedrooms. If anything must be neglected it would have to be the sitting room, for that represented the least of our comfort and necessity.

Taking stock of things in the dining-room we found that table service was as yet unprovided for. A set of neat china in half dozens may be bought for \$6.00, and \$5.00 additional will include vegetable dishes, platters and necessary dessert, fruit and side dishes. An extra pitcher will be required for water or milk, and half a dozen tumblers. These should cost 75 cents. For \$10.00 one may buy half a dozen plated knives and the same number of forks and teaspoons, with three table and three dessert spoons and a good plated butter knife.

Table linen must be bought, and three medium-sized and one large cloth will be required. For the smaller size to be used when the table is not extended, two yards long will be quite enough. This should cost not over 75 cents per yard. There are almost always bargain sales, and lengths of two yards of really superior qualities may be had for that amount. The three will cost \$4.50, and a finer one, three yards long, may be had for \$3. If napkins are used every day, there must be two dozen, which may be had in fairly good grades for \$2 per dozen. This will bring the cost of the linen up to \$12.50, although something may be saved on that bill by judicious or fortunate buying.

This makes the dining-room the most expensive part of the house, but there is no portion of an establishment where the good taste and refinement of a family is so clearly shown as in the table service. When the day's work was done we often sat around the dining-table, and of course needed a table cover, for which material was bought and work done at odd times. At a cash outlay of \$2.50 a really handsome cloth was made.

The sitting-room must now be finished, and for this we bought for \$10 a rug made of a remnant of good Brussels carpet, with border. It was a bargain, but one such as any wideawake housekeeper may at almost any time run across. The lounge was an item which meant comfort or aggravation, according to circumstances. We gave the measurements, and insisted on having everything good. For \$16.00 we got a thoroughly reliable, substantial frame, with good springs and port hair top. We made a cover of dark blue denim, and edged it with scallops and a vine of dull orange and olive in linen rope floss. An hour-glass-shaped table of polished cherry, with turned legs and beveled top, cost \$4.50. A large arm-chair, with splint back and seat,

was \$4.50; a small neat rocker of polished wood, cost \$4, and three neat, trim rush-bottomed chairs, bought in natural color and finished, one in gilt, with blue ribbons, and two in white enamel paint with yellow ribbons, cost \$6.

Nothing filled a space at one side of the mantel as well as a set of book-shelves in cherry. These cost \$10, and were voted the best investment we had made. There was a grate in the room, but most flats are so cheaply built that the cold creeps in at every corner, so we indulged ourselves in a good stove, costing \$12, put up. This thoroughly heated the room and was much cleaner and every way more desirable than any open grate ever constructed.

Our expenditure thus far footed up \$233.18, leaving \$16.82 to distribute where it was most needed. Two pairs of pillows cost \$9.60, two foot cushions or hassocks were considered cheap at \$1, and a lamp with a green shade drew from our little remaining fund the sum of \$3.50. \$3.72 alone remained, and here we stopped. The trifle left over would be needed for little odds and ends, and we wanted to keep strictly within the sum set apart for these purposes.

The dining-room had turned out to be the most expensive part of our establishment, but with this we found no fault, as it was to be used more as a living-room than any other. We had a piano, and this, with the other articles, quite filled up the little sitting-room.

We had therefore expended about \$81.80 on the dining-room, \$72.06 in the sitting-room, \$20 in the kitchen, \$59.10 for the two bedrooms, and had a trifle left over for emergencies. In our furnishing, the small room, answering to the hall bedroom, had been passed over. This was now put in order, to be used as a sewing-room. The apartments were so small that sewing and the machine were too much in the way, and as this room was not just at the time absolutely needed for any other purpose, we were glad to have it for this and also as a sort of storage place for the thousand and one articles that every family must have at hand.

Our flat was comfortable, homelike, and not without a certain amount of good style, and there was not a shabby, cheap or tawdry thing in it. Every article was good of its kind, and durable, and quite handsome as well. There were many little finishing touches to be added in the way of table-covers, portieres, sofa and chair cushions, and the like.

And such furnishing is not beyond the ability of every one who has the same amount of money. There were no specially low prices or unusual bargains, only goods of which the market is full. A little time and some self-denial were necessary, the former to look about, the latter to keep within bounds and restrain the desire to purchase that which first caught the eye, rather than that which commended itself by reason of its quality and sensible, quiet, conservative style.

An odd new bedroom suit is in shrimp pink, decorated with quaint Japanese pictures. The washstand is furnished with a couple of silk curtains. A Japanese table, fitted with shelves after the fashion of a cabinet, adds to the effect.

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